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Point of Youth

Community Compassion

When you improve your community, you can improve your neighborhood. When you improve your community, you can improve your school. When you improve your community, you can improve a life. Improving your community can seem to hold very limited options. However, in all actuality, improving your community can be a very open-ended choice.

I have personally seen my community improved in many ways. I don't limit the improvement of my community to the local playground either. To me, improving my community can be anything from new supplies for the local school, to the founding of a local neighborhood watch program. In my community, I've seen improvement come to and from everyone. The great thing about improvement is that everyone can participate.

The ways I've seen my community improve have varied greatly. One way was when the local high school was given money so they could supply air-conditioning in the gym. This was a major bonus for student athletes, who could now have relief from the summer heat. Even though this was an important event, I can think of an even more admirable contribution. This occurred when the school's basketball coach received an anonymous tip that his players had been partying. Rather than put on a pretend show of anger, his anger and disappointment was real. He presented the case to the school administration and was given very little support. Although most people would find this a

relief, he discreetly had the players run over 15 miles up and down the basketball court. This was a service, not only to the young men, but also an example to the students.

I try to improve my community as often as I can. One way I try to help my community is by joining my school's SADD chapter. I try to be an active member and help with our many projects. One of my favorite things I have done was participating in a jail visit. This visit consisted of a tour of the new jail that was being built in my county. My local SADD chapter was invited to help the officers learn to respond to everyday jail situations. We were asked to play the role of the inmates and we did our best to play our part by being difficult.

Even though improving your community can be fun, it can also be work. I have helped organize events that were very stressful. However, I think that the combined efforts of many people ended up being worth it. A prime example would be the SADD dance that I helped to organize. It was hard to get decorations put up in a matter of hours, but everyone worked together and managed to get the job done. The sense of accomplishment you feel when you've done a good deed is greatly worth the hassle.

Although these are all good examples, I still think the best way to improve your community is to be a role model. I'm sure most people can remember the person who was their biggest role model, outside of their family. I remember that mine were the high school students that I thought couldn't be cooler if they tried. This included my very own cousin who is five years older than me. I remember wanting to follow in their footsteps, that is, until I hit high school. That was when I learned the difference between those who talk the talk and those who walk the walk. Although I was devastated by my fallen heroes, I was glad that my cousin was still there to turn to. She has been part of my

inspiration throughout my life. I want to be one of the role models that little kids love. I never want them to feel disappointed in me the way I was disappointed in my heroes.

Many of you may wonder what you can do to improve your communities. The answer to that question is “Anything.” Anything can be improved, anywhere can be helped. Anyone can be inspired. Use your talents wherever they are needed the most. It may be at your school, it may be in your home. It may be at your local park. Wherever it is, it’s waiting for you. The opportunity is calling.